

EPI Update for Friday, June 18, 2010
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza testing and reporting reminders**
- **Elevated adult blood lead linked to home renovations**
- **Missionaries may be at risk**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Influenza testing and reporting reminders

While Iowa has not recently identified influenza cases, several other states are reporting sporadic H1N1 cases; thus, Iowa could see occasional influenza cases over the summer months. Remember to send any positive rapid influenza test to the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) for confirmation. Also, obtain a nasal pharyngeal swab from patients hospitalized with influenza-like illness, and ship the virus cold and in viral transport media for PCR testing.

2009 H1N1-related hospitalizations and death are still reportable to the Iowa Department of Public Health. Please continue to use the Iowa Disease Surveillance System to report hospitalizations and deaths. Reports may also be submitted to CADE by fax or mail.

Elevated adult blood lead linked to home renovations

Recently an Iowa adult was reported to have a blood lead level over 40 µg/dL (adult lead levels should be less than 10 µg/dL). This lead exposure likely occurred during renovations and repairs done on their 1900's home. Elevated lead levels increase the risk of high blood pressure, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems.

Anyone involved with or around construction, renovation, or repair work needs to know how to protect themselves against lead exposure. This is especially important when working with walls or surfaces painted with lead-based paints. One should assume there is lead-based paint in any home built before 1978 unless environmental testing has proved otherwise. Lead may also be present in commercial buildings and structures. Visit

www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/lead_poisoning_prevention.asp or www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/lead/ for more information.

Medical providers should be aware of this risk, assess appropriate patients for possible lead exposure, and offer venous blood lead testing. For more information and assistance, contact the IDPH's adult lead program at 800-972-2026.

Missionaries may be at risk

In April 2008, a cluster of patients positive for dengue were identified among a group of U.S. missionaries (including Iowans) who had traveled to the Dominican Republic.

IDPH, CDC, and the Minnesota state health department interviewed these patients to determine possible exposure risks and their knowledge of these risks.

None of the interviewed missionaries were aware of the risk of dengue and only two had sought pre-travel health information. None had taken precautions such as using bed nets. This and other investigations have demonstrated that missionaries are often not aware of country-specific health risks, nor the recommended measures to reduce these risks. This, combined with the fact that missionaries' work is often in rural areas, results in a much higher risk for diseases like dengue when compared to other travelers. For a complete report of this investigation, see www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5921a2.htm.

Health care professionals should try to ensure that missionaries are educated on health risks, and provided with appropriate vaccines and medical prophylaxis prior to travel. Basic traveler's health information for both travelers and their health care providers can be found at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx. More technical assistance is available at travel clinics around Iowa or by calling IDPH at 800-362-2736.

Erratum: *Clostridium perfringens* is a gram **positive** bacteria, not gram negative as noted in last week's update.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736